

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are presently pending in this application.

In the December 22, 2006 Office Action, claims 1-8 were rejected. More specifically, the status of the application in light of this Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claims 1, 4, 5 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,810,273 to Matilla et al. ("Matilla") in view of U.S. Application Publication No. 2003/0224771 to Nogueiro et al. ("Nogueiro");

(B) Claims 2 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matilla in view of Nogueiro, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,067,319 to Copeland ("Copeland");

(C) Claims 3 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matilla in view of Nogueiro and Copeland, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,438,180 to Kavcic et al. ("Kavcic"); and

(D) Claims 9 and 10 were indicated to be allowable.

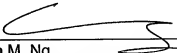
In response applicants have canceled Claims 1-8. Remaining Claims 9-10 are allowable. Although the applicants' attorney agrees with the Examiner's conclusion that Claims 9 and 10 are allowable, the applicants' attorney notes that the claims may be allowable for reasons other than those identified by the Examiner and does not concede that the Examiner's characterization of the terms of the claims and the prior art are correct.

In view of the foregoing, the pending claims comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the applied art. The Applicants accordingly request reconsideration of the application and a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Chun M. Ng at (206) 359-7488.

Respectfully submitted,

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